DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 154 IR 010 076

AUTHOR Anderson, William; Zharkov, D. S.
TITLE Library Services to Hospital Patients and Handicapped Readers Libraries and the Deaf--The Hidden Society [and] Social Achievements of the RSFSR in Providing the Blind with Books.
INSTITUTION International Federation of Library Associations, The Hague (Netherlands).
PUB DATE Aug 81
NOTE 23p.; Best copy available. Papers presented at the annual conference of the International Federation of Library Associations (47th, Leipzig, East Germany, August 17-22, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiotape Recordings; Braille; Foreign Countries; *Hearing Impairments; Library Extension; Library Networks; Library Planning; *Library Services; *Public Libraries; Publishing Industry; Special Libraries; Talking Books; *Visual Impairments
IDENTIFIERS England; Library Statistics; User Needs; *USSR

ABSTRACT

The first of two papers presents suggestions on library services for the deaf by a British university lecturer, and the second provides an enumeration of Russian achievements in providing the blind with books. Based on an outline of the personal and social implications of deafness and unawareness of the deaf on the part of libraries and the general public, the first paper recommends that public libraries initiate education for deaf children in the use of the library, establish contacts with organizations of the deaf, furnish information resources for the deaf, arrange training for staff who will be serving the deaf, and generally encourage those with hearing disabilities to recognize the library as an information provider. Four references are given. The second paper covers publishing and library services for the blind in the Russian Federation (RSFSR). Information is presented on the organization and services of the centralized network of special libraries for the blind and the publication of braille literature and audio recordings or "readers" for the blind on a state-planned basis utilizing the financial resources of the All-Russia Society of the Blind (ARSB). The activities of the Republican Central Library for the Blind are also outlined. Statistical data are provided. (ESR)

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

47th Annual Conference Papers

Libraries Serving the General Public Division:
Library Services to Hospital Patients and Handicapped Readers Section

LIBRARY SERVICES TO HOSPITAL PATIENTS AND HANDICAPPED READERS LIBRARIES AND THE DEAF - THE HIDDEN SOCIETY [AND] SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RSFSR IN PROVIDING THE BLIND WITH BOOKS

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Section:

Library Services to Hospital Patients and Handicapped Readers Libraries and the Deaf - the Hidden Society. By William ANDERSON, Lecturer, School of Librarianship, Leeds Polytechnic, LEEDS, England.

Abstract: The library may not be aware of the deaf and the deaf may be unwilling to use the library. The library must intervene in the life of the deaf person as soon after the onset of deafness as possible. The paper explores the possibilities of action both by the library and the deaf person.

My starting point was my first contact with deaf people in 1979. Like many others, I had been aware of the deaf but had no contact with them. The experience was profoundly disturbing. Once I began to write this paper, by happy coincidence I found two important and relevant publications (noted at the end).

Further stimulus came from the current International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, and the debate which followed Jes PETERSON's paper (The Handicapped in Reading and the Public Library), given at the IFLA conference in 1979.

Why was I so distrubed? Among the deaf, I was isolated, I was different - I could not communicate. This hidden world of the deaf excluded not merely the outside world of hearing people, but also my 'world' - the world of information and libraries.

The DEAF - Who are they?

If is difficult to identify the deaf (and the hard of hearing), for many reasons. There has been no census of the deaf in the United States of America since 1930, and no census of the deaf in the United Kingdom. Estimates suggest there are two million deaf and 13 million with hearing impairment in the U.S.A. and one and a half million using hearing aids and ten million with hearing losses in the U.K. These figures have no meaning because we cannot identify individuals - they must identify themselves. The deaf learn to cope with a narrower experience of daily life, and if they can cope they rarely identify themselves or acknowledge their disability. Because deafness is related to age, we may expect more deaf people in society where the old are an increasing proportion of that society.

A small proportion are pre-lingually deaf. The person may achieve a reading age of 8 years when he leaves school. He will have experienced an effort to encourage him to communicate orally, but his effort to learn to read and communicate will have been immense. As an adult, he will be expected to cope on his own in a world in which speech and hearing are common - he will have expectations heaped upon him. He will begin a slow process of learning and coping which will be life-long.

For the rest, deafness may occur at a post-lingual stage, from the age of 3 years onwards. The experiences and memories of an oral ability gives this larger group the best opportunity in later life.

Because less than 10% of deaf people have deaf parents, deafness does mean a sense of isolation. Unlike any other group of disabled people, this isolcation is a result of a disability in communication. Efforts to regain a communicative ability are successful, but only within the community which the deaf build.

The CONSEQUENCES

Deafness is a shock. A sense of isolation and withdrawel is felt, a sense of hurt and sorrow at a loss of ability. Identity and personality are threatened, and they must be recreated. This process accompanies a realization that they are segregated from a society in which the ability to use speech is utterly important. As a sub group in society, the deaf develop characteristics which tend to separate them from society - their peers are deaf people, their sense of identity is recreated and they are more ar ease with other deaf people.

The DEAF in SOCIETY

The deaf are not the smallest group, but they attract the smallest amount of sympathy. The British survey of public attitudes showed that deafness was a severe handicap, almost equal to loosing a leg or being confined to a wheel-chair - but blindness was thought to be over twice as severe. Other responses in this survey are also illogical, because the understanding of deafness is imperfect - people thought that sudden deafness as an adult was the worst sort of deafness, worse than pre-lingual deafness. Only 12% of those interviewed thought that when deaf people used their hands, they were using sign language - only 25% said that a deaf person's voice or speech was different.

This is ignorance, but it is based on a lack of understanding about the deaf - they are disabled in communication. In the hearing world, where speech and hearing are so common that no one mentions the fact, and where the deaf are, visually at least, not distinguishable from others, an instantly recorded attitude may not be a true record of our knowledge. But the survey figures are notable evidence that an educational effort is still needed to enable the hearing to understand the life of the deaf.

The DEAF SOCIETY

This 'society', like the preceeding comments, is a generalization - a deaf individual is an individual who is deaf, a person. As with other groups, there is no homogeneity among the deaf. Within the deaf group, the feeling of inclusion is compensation for the exclusion experienced in the larger society. Any behavioral inconsistency (for example, an overt ability to hear), threatens the inclusion of that person, who may find himself excluded from both the hearing and the deaf society. By definition, it is difficult for a hearing person to belong to the deaf society, where shared experience, shared problems, shared education, bind members together. Friendship is extended to others (for example, hearing relatives) but not membership. This exclusivity also distinguishes between individuals and groups using different signing languages.

The deaf are cautious in their relations with the hearing - only accredited members are recruited: these may be associates of the deaf, interpreters, friends, social workers. Total membership is unlikely to be offered unless total communication is given. Ability to communicate is the primary distinguishing characteristic for the deaf.

Within their group, the deaf find sociability and a sense of belonging. This is a world which they have created - it is a sanctuary, a private and hidden society.

STEREOTYPES AND STIGMA

We create no stereotype of the hearing person but we are sometimes ready to do this for the deaf person. In the British survey, no evidence for such a stereotype was found. Individual characteristics are disregarded in the creation of

the stereotype, which is a generalized identification description. The deaf have odd voices - unnatural and unmodified. They tend to stare at faces, something we are not accustomed to. Equally, they ask for sentences to be repeated. Stereotypes are necessary in personal relations, most notably when we lack knowledge about other people - our perception of the unknown person depends, initially at least, on this attribution. This inaccuracy of the stereotype arises from its definition: its value in this instance may be in informing the hearing person about his ignorance. For the deaf, however, the stereotype confirms his role as an 'outsider'.

The social stigma is not so amenable to re-use. The disabled are 'reduced persons' in the minds of others: they are not whole. Our expectations are confronted and affronted. The confusion in the mind of the hearing person concentrates on the loss of hearing of the deaf - the word 'deaf' itself is unhelpful, as it hides the true disability, that of ruptured communication. If the deaf person aspires to become hearing and orally normal, he will create his own stigma. Only if he discounts this aim will he recover his self esteem - but this will be assailed in the hearing world. The status of the deaf is continually challenged - they must re-establish themselves in every new relationship.

How do the Deaf Cope?

Outside his own society, the deaf person has several strategies for coping. He may pretend to hear and understand a communication (rather like a student will) concealing his ignorance. He will select clues about the situation and respond to these (just as a foreign visitor will read a cash total in preference to understanding the verbal equivalent spoken). He will substitute an alternative hearing such as lip-reading (itself a very uncertain achievement).

If he acknowledges his deafness, he will make this clear to others, or use an intermediary (who may cease to be neutral as a medium in communication, and begin to take over the event). He may emphasize his deafness, in order to encourage the hearing person to offer clearer communication.

How Do the Hearing Cope?

The hearing can be confronted with a real problem. When a written message is not understood and lip-reading by the deaf is not achieved, an intermediary is necessary. The tendency to shout (which foreign visitors experience when they do not understand) is unhelpful to the deaf-proximity and the attempt to face the ear, confuse the effort the deaf person is making. The assumptions that are made in the hearing world - knowledge of names, words, roles, relationships and a multitude of others - must be carefully explored when coping with a deaf person. This is not to say that the person is stupid - he is merely not experienced.

Responsibilities for Change

For the deaf, the situation is changing rapidly. No comparisons can truly be made between, for example, the U.S.A. and the U.K., or France or the Scandinavian countries. In the U.S.A., the deaf community is not merely numerically large, its social composition touches and included the powerful and the government at all levels. But the promise of social change, for the deaf, has come from the U.S.A., and this is acknowledged.

Communications technology, world and domestic, is now embracing all countries, and all deaf people will have increasing opportunities to participate in the hearing world. These developments are too obvious to list.

Public Libraries

This emphasis on the deaf is a necessary preliminary to a review of the public library. The IFLA revised standards for public libraries repeat the UNESCO public library manifesto "...public libraries must be readily accessible...(to) all members of the community...". It must offer people "... the opportunity to keep in touch with their times, to educate themselves continuously and keep abreast of progress in the sciences and the arts." New forms of record, apart from book forms, must be used, an accomodation for Videotex systems.

The deaf are omitted from the standards for special groups of library users, apart from the generality of the disabled). This is an important omission, especially if we belive that a handicap like deafness is a disadvantage or

restriction of activity caused by a disability (the disability here being the loss or reduction of functional hearing). The deaf only overcome this handicap among their peers, in their hidden society.

IYDP

The resolution of the United Nations proclaiming the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons lists five objectives. If we read these, we will realize that they are framed in the context of the major, hearing group. The disabled, the deaf, are expected to somehow change in order to accommodate the able, rather than themselves. Our awareness of this bias should enable us to offer practical help.

Intervention

The public library serves all the community, and the easier aspects of identification and service have been achieved, for example, work with children. Promotion of Library services to the deaf community demands an aggressive, inventive and outgoing attitude by the librarian. There is a need for provision to be made at a level at which information can be enjoyed, as accessible to the deaf as information is accessible to the remainder of the community.

This effort needs to be continuous, because of the geographic mobility of the community, and, for the deaf, because the onset of deafness and hearing difficulties can occur at any time.

The following recommendations follow from what has been outlined above.

Education

1. The library should intervene at the school level, both with special, deaf schools, and with other, 'integrated' or 'mainstreaming' schools. Research in Britain has found that education for library use is inadequate - beginnings have been made in Britain to encourage an expansion of the curriculum to include library and information studies, and the local library can participate in this if it takes the initiative.

Outside the Library

2. Ten years ago, public libraries began to reflect ideas generated in other service organizations, and outreach, going outside the walls of the library, was fashionable. The emphasis has declined in the recognition of other problems and opportunities - financing problems and the encouragement by computer technology to transform routines.

Contacts must be initiated with organizations of the deaf - they will respond to a formalized, but voluntary and tension free contact.

From experience in other research, I recognize the need to identify, within any grouping of the disabled, both the formal leaders (the Chairmen and Secretaries) and the social leaders - those whose influence is respected by the disabled. It cannot be emphasised enough that the initial approaches must be carefully done and that agreement by the deaf themselves, is given. As we have seen, the deaf guard access to their groups - they are naturally cautious.

Inside the Library

3. The literature on the deaf recognises that there has been a concentration of effort on adjustment to the disability, on causes and on treatment. Insufficient attention has been given to their social status or to access to social resources.

Staff training must incorporate attitude training for all staff who meet the deaf. This is an educational, not a conditioning, effort.

Information resources and hardware (film loops, video cassettes, induction loops) are available, and can be provided.

The Deaf

4. The deaf must be encouraged to recognise the library as an information provider. Yet the library may appear as the most threatening place, for this is a total communication store.

Successful and helpful experiences using libraries will be quickly reported within the deaf community - so isolated individuals must be reached also. The deaf must be encouraged - to expect to be spoken to; to acknolwedge that the reaction by the hearing is a reaction to a spoiled assumption of their knowledge and resources rather than a reaction to their disability, or to themselves.

The Hearing

5. The hearing should understand that a deaf person is not defined by that disability: he is a singular individual, and his ability to communicate must not be underrated. His assumptions must be minimal and need to be tested.

General Themes

We may recognise in all that has been said that the deaf may also be seen as a representative group of the total society - that the deaf are a mirror of society and a reflection of it.

In a wider sense, the recommendations for action point to the vigourous role that the public library must play - to inform attitudes, to publicize themselves, to acknowledge special needs - in social life. The public library service in Norway realizes that every unit, even small and remote libraries, can respond to the deaf in its community - we can achieve this in our own countries.

The deaf epitomise the commitment that the public library has accepted, of service to all. The themes outlined, although they are related to the deaf, are relevant to all the people we serve.

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47th IFLA Session, Leipzig, 1981

Zharkov D. S.

SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RSFSR IN PROVIDING THE BLIND WITH BOOKS

In our country thousands of blind people receive a specialized education and do efficient work at plants and factories, and in different fields of science, technology and culture. Among blind specialists there are managers of societies for the blind, and of enterprises for the blind, professors, lecturers and scientific workers of institutions of higher learning and scientific institutions, teachers of secondary schools, librarians, lawyers, and others.

Broad participation of the blind in varied and intense socially useful labour has become possible due to permanent concern shown by the Soviet state for the social security of eyesight invalids, their education, and employment, as well as for library service of the blind and specialised book publishing.

One of the major factors influencing the rehabilitation and integration of the blind in society is the tangible achievements in book publishing, braille periodicals, and library service in the Soviet Union, and in the Russian Federation, in particular.

At present, the RSFSR has 67 stationary libraries for sightless people, 142 branches of libraries, 1,186 mobile libraries, and 2,200 groups for reading alound.[1] The library network is centralized. All of them are supported by the state and are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR which makes it possible to develop and improve their work in a balanced way. The management of the network of special libraries is carried out by a two-stage system: the Republican Central Library for the Blind (RCLB) guides the activities of regional libraries for the blind throughout the Republic; regional libraries are in charge of their branches, mobile libraries and groups for reading aloud. Special attention is paid to problems of ensuring maximum proximity of the book to the place of work, residence and studies of sightless people.

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1 A branch is a section of a library under a training and production enterprise which has a stationary part of the book collection being regularly replenished at the expense of accessions from the stationary library.
A mobile library is a form of non-stationary service of sightless people which is conducted on a voluntary basis at the place of residence, treatment and studies. Books for a mobile library are selected and regularly exchanged by the stationary library; groups for reading alound mean organisation of reading aloud of flat-bed literature to a group of sightless people.

The establishment of branch libraries at training and production enterprises[1] is the most efficient form of library service rendered to working members of the All-Russia Society of the Blind (ARSB). The main role in organising library service of the ARSB members at their place of residence, studies, treatment and leasure is assigned to moblie libraries and groups for reading aloud which are set up at ARSB primary organisations.

ARSB members living far from mobile libraries and groups for reading aloud can receive books on an extramural loan system (book by post) from a stationary library.

The past few years have seen considerable development of library service of the blind at their place of residence. The so-called home loans of stationary libraries provide for the delivery of literature to the homes of sightless elderly people, i.e. to those who suffer from additional disability.

Interlibrary loan is also widely used to meet the needs of sightless people in books.

Libraries for the blind exchange books in embossed type and "readers", and receive educational, scientific and technical literature from scientific and technical libraries.

Thus, the book is brought to the notice of practically every sightless person who can make use of it. Library service has embraced 123,000 eyesight invalids.

The issue of literature for the blind ensures an uninterrupted flow of embossed type books and "readers" to the collections of special libraries, as the issue of these kinds of books is envisaged by current (annual) and long-term (five-year) plans endorsed by the State Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book Distribution.

Plans are drawn up with the assistance of specialists-bibliographers of the publishing organisations, librarians attending to sightless people and blind readers themselves.

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1 Specialised training and production enterprises of ARSB serve as a basis for conducting state measures aimed at social rehabilitation and integration of the blind. The selection of a production profile, development of technology, the use of protection devices and non-standard equipment, of different devices easing the work of the blind and expanding possibilities of its application, and accomplishment of measures aimed at protecting residual vision are the characteristic features of these enterprises.

At present the collections of the libraries for the blind in the RSFSR contain 4,235,000 Volumes. Of these there are 1,885,000 items in embossed type 1,344,000 books recorded on magnetic tape, and 847,000 flat-bed (planographic) items.

The necessity of maintaining all the three kinds of literature in the collections of libraries stems from the functional features of each kind.

The main functional feature of embossed type literature is determined by its significance for mastering reading and writing. Only after learning to read and write with the aid of the braille system can a person blind from birth or childhood become literate and for a blind, deaf and dumb person this is the only accessible means of cognition. The braille characters are the key to reading and writing for the blind.

The book recorded on magnetic tape or cassette (the so-called "reader") is accessible even to those sightless people who have not mastered the braille system of reading and writing. It makes reading accessible to any sightless person who has no serious audatory defects. The "reader" is published and disseminated in a more rapid and mobile way than the braille book.

Flat-bed literature meets largely the production, educational and scientific needs and requirements of students and blind specialists, because the issue of embossed type books and "readers" for these purposes encounters serious technical difficulties. It is not accidental that the annual share of educational (for higher schools), scientific and production-technical literature in publications issued for the blind amounts to not more than 15-20 per cent of the total number.

The embossed type books and "readers" are accumulated in library collections the relative number of flat-bed literature in the total collection decreases. Thus, whereas books in flat-bed type in 1976 accounted for 22 per cent of the total collection of libraries, in 1980 they accounted for 20 per cent.

Books in embossed type are issued by Prosveshcheniye Publishers (Moscow). Annually it turns out 240-300 titles with a print of 200-1,000 each.

The data cited below give an idea of the percentage of books in different fields of knowledge and of educational and reference literature in the total amount of literature issued by the Prosveshcheniye Publishers in 1978-1980:

Text-books and manuals for secondary shcools 15%
Manuals for students and teachers of technical colleges and higher schools 3%
Literature for grown-ups beginning to read with the aid of the braille system 1.5%
Socio-economic and political literature 7%
Popular science literature 7.5%
Juridical literature 1.5%
Reference literature 1.5%
Literature in esperanto 0.3%
Literature on sport 1.5%
Russian fiction and literature of the peoples of the USSR 10%
Foreign literature 5%
Literature for children of the middle and senior school age 5%
Literature for children of pre-school and junior school age 4%
Sheet music collection and manuals in music and singing 1.5%

The range of reading of signtless people is considerably expanded by periodicals and thematic collections. The RSFSR alone publishes 3 journals and 8 thematic collections for the blind.

"Nasha zhizn" (our life) is the organ of the Central Board of the all-Russian Society for the Blind; it appears in the braille and flat-bed versions. The journal covers all the sides of the life and work of sightless people in the Soviet Union and problems of their social, cultural, medical and communal service; it also acquaints readers with samples of the artistic creative work of eyesight invalids and informs them about the social status of the blind in foreign countries.

Prizyv (call) is the organ of the ARSS Central Board; it has been issued in embossed type since 1963, and as a recorded version since 1978. The materials it carries are reprints from central periodicals intended for the broad public and acquaint the blind with Party and governmental materials and documents, and with publications on philosophy and political economy, the cultural development of the Soviet society and international situation.

Literaturniya chteniya (literary readings) is a literary and artistic journal which has been issued since 1963 in embossed type. It carries reprints of the best works of fiction by Soviet and foreign novelists, poets and playwright which were published in literary and artistic journals for sighted people.

Annually the All-Russia Society for the Blind issues a number of thematic collections intended for the most numerous groups of readers united by common professional or amateur interests, thus, the collections "A guide for the cultural and educational worker" (4 issues), "A guide to amateur talent activities" and "In the world of music" (8 issues) are addressed to directors of the ARSB clubs and to the management and participants of amateur talent activities in which about 70,000 sightless people are engaged. Collections "Physical Culture and Sport" and "Chess and Draughts" (4 issues) are issued for 15,000 blind and visually handicapped people going in for physical culture and sports. The collection "Computing mathematics and Programming" (12 issues) is intended for a comparatively small (100 people) but rapidly increasing group of mathematicians-programmers. Annually four issues of the collection "For you, women" are published (women account for almost 47% of the total number of the ARSB members).

In 1980 there were 23,000 readers of braille literature. Readers of braille literature were issued 1,049,000 items last year. The circulation rate of the collection of embossed type literature amounted to 0.5. The number of books of this kind per reader is 82.

"Readers" play an ever increasing role in the life of sightless people. Whereas only recently they have been used largely to bring reading within the reach of new readers, in particular, of those who had not mastered the braille system, they have now become for sightless people a constant assistant in studies, work, self-education and mastery of spiritual culture.

"Readers" in the RSFSR are issued by a studio of sound recording set up by the All-Russia Society of the Blind and are sent to state libraries at the expense of the Society. "Readers" are produced with the assistance of qualified professional anouncers (who are employed at Central Radio and Television).

Annually the sound recording studio produces about 270-300 titles of books with a print of 400 copies each. The total time of recording the originals amounts to 4,000-4,500 hours.

The sound-track is made for socio-economic, and popular science literature, as well as for domestic and foreign fiction, both classical and modern.

The percentage of this literature versus the total amount of recordings issued in 1978-1980 is as follows:

Manuals for secondary school pupils	6%
Manuals for seondary school teachers	12%
Topical socio-economic literature	15%
Popular science literature	15%
Russian fiction and fiction of the peoples of the USSR	24%
Foreign Literature	20%
Recent publications (Party and governmental documents, new works by Soviet and foreign authors	8%

The audible journal "Khochu vsyo znat" (I want to know all) (6 issues a year) containing reprints from central perioidcals) is of great importance for providing rapid information to eyesight invalids about the latest technical achievements and discoveries in the field of natural science and medicine, as well as about events of cultural life.

"Readers" are made use of by 96,000 readers, i.e. by 65 per cent of their total number. In 1980 they received 5,275,000 rolls. The circulation rate of this kind of editions in libraries for the blind is the highest (3.9). (The circulation rate of editions printed in flat-bed type ranges from 1.8 to 2). The number of "readers" per reader amounts to 20 rolls.

In an effort to satisfy reader needs more fully libraries for the blind also assist in producing "readers", for this purpose their staff include such specialists as librarian-readers and technician-restorer. Libraries record materials of Party congresses, reports and speeches of the leaders of the Party and government (so that the blind receive them at the same time as the sighted people do, without waiting for the sound recording studio to supply these materials); most interesting popular science books, booklets and articles; materials of regional nature; literature in national languages (in the Autoomous Republic); books in typhlology, text-books and manuals in response to readers' requests; talks on books and bibliographic reviews (i.e. materials promoting culture of reading and facilitating the choice of literature).

The number of books recorded by each library amounts to 10-15 a year. Although they are inferior in quality as compared with those received from a sound recording studio their importance is obvious.

The recordings made at the Republican central library for the blind are especially large in number and of a fairly high technical standard. Special

attention is paid to recordings of books requested by people doing intellectual work, students and past-graduates, as their educational and professional requirements cannot always be met by publications provided by a sound recording studio and Prosveshcheniya Publishers.

The Central Library elaborates problems of both general and particular methodics of recording scientific, educational and production-technical literature. The methodics includes optimal variants of reproduction and boils down to the development of a) the technique of recording texts in case of deviations from linear sequence (diagrams, notes, tables, formuals), b) ways of elucidating illustrative material (charts, draughts, drawings, photographs, etc.) and to the development of search tools which facilitate rapid detection of the page, paragraph of chapter of the book one needs. Once in a while the Library invites specialists (lecturers of higher schools, engineers, and others) to record these kinds of literature.

The Republican Central Library for the Blind has gained considerable experience in experimental recording of literature in art and architecture. The purpose of the recordings ("What is Architecture?", "Rembrandt's Creative Work," "The Tretyakov Gallery," "General History of the Arts," "The Image of V.K. Lenin in Fine Arts," and others) is to help sightless people form a notion about works of art and expand their cognitive possibilities, and to communicate to them the ideological, semantic and emotional content of the best samples of world art.

The recordings include information about the laws of the psychology of a spectator's perception and about notions of fine arts, as well as about the history of the creation of a given painting. The recordings also give a detailed description of a picture. They are accompanied by musical fragments which help a sightless person to develop and psychological mood corresponding to the spectator's emotional state.

The Republican Central Library for the Blind has developed the methodics of choosing musical illustrations and of their consecutive matching with the recording of textual material. The Library is developing principles, forms and methods of acquainting sightless people with samples of architectural monuments, sculpture and ceramics with the help of the braille system and "readers".

The arts department being formed at the RCLB contains models of the architectural monuments of the Moscow Kremlin (Uglovaya, Arsenalnaya, Vodovzvodnaya and Spasky towers, the Cathedral of the Assumption, and others) pig iron casting, and ceramics.

Each exhibit is supplied with an inscription in embossed dots known as Braille; a specially composed story about the exhibits on display (the history of the creation, the characteristics of a monument and of a sample, its importance for the development of national culture, etc.) is recorded on magnetic tape. Thus, the braille system and sound recording coupled with visual aids serve as an important means of partial compensation for the lost visual perceptions.

At present the Research Institute of Medical Instrument-Making is making recordings on flexible long-playing records. The recording time is one hour per record, the speed of disc rotation is 33 cps. A special electric gramaphone "Leader-208" is being designed to provide playback. The first recordings (the "Health" popular science journal) have already been made.

Plans have been drawn up to record socio-political popular journals of the type "Chelovek i zakon" (man and law), "Vokrug sveta" (around the world), certain sections from the journals "Khimiya i Zhizn" (chemistry and life), "Nauka i Tekhnika" (Science and technology), and others, as well as small-size works by modern authors. Records will be disseminated through subscription among eyesight invalids for personal use, and sent to libraries for the blind. The print of each title will amount to 16,000 copies.

Thus, at the service of sightless readers are the best socio-economic and popular science literature, Party and government documents, works by Russia and foreign authors which make up the golden fund of world literature sheet music collections, reference literature, periodicals, etc., which enables them to get acquainted with the achievements of the science and culture on a par with sighted people.

The collections of libraries for the blind include a small number of flat-bed books issued in enlarged type. These are mainly text-books for junior classes of schools for the blind and visually handicapped children.

The qualitative make-up of the collections of the libraries for the blind can be exemplified by the results of their check-up versus the books

which are in high demand at public libraries.[1]

Of the 1,971 titles included in the list the libraries for the blind had 725 titles (36%) of the books issued in braille types or recorded on magnetic tape. The Russian classical and Soviet fiction are well represented accounting for 85 and 72 per cent respectively. If flat-bed publications are taken into account special libraries have almost all the works of domestic fiction included into the list. The socio-economic and popular science literature is represented not so widely as in fiction: it accounts for only 12 per cent in the publications for the blind. Together with flat-bed literature the number of titles kept at libraries for the blind amounts to 41 per cent.

The quality of the collections for the blind is also characterized by the fact that of 217 books of the library series[2] issued during the 1973-1975 period 83 titles were found in reproduced form in the libraries for the blind. All this testifies to the correctness of the main criteria used in selecting books to be reproduced.

Since their establishment in 1946 the publishing houses for the issue of literature for the blind over 8,900 titles of books in embossed type have been issued. As many as 4,500 titles had been recorded on magnetic tape between 1961 when the studio was set up and 1980.

On average a person needs 10-12 books in embossed type and 12-14 "readers" a year.

The comparison of these data with the available collections once again points to the rich possibilities of special libraries for meeting varied needs and requirements of sightless people.

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1 A list of books which are in high demand at public libraries, to be included in long-term plans of publishing houses: Material for discussion - Moscow, 1973, 155pp. Inscription before the title: the Lenin State Library of the USSR.

A list of books which are in high demand at public libraries to be included in long-term plans of publishing houses: Material for discussion - Moscow, 1975, 121pp. Incription before the title: Lenin State Library of the USSR.

2 The library series includes the best books issued by the decision of the State Committee for Publishing, Pringting and Book Destribution and the Ministry of Culture for libraries only.

Since the mid-1960s the RCLB has undertaken a number of research projects aimed at studying the composition of the book collections in libraries for the blind and using them, as well as at investigating their subject and specific correspondence to the tasks of libraries. These studies allowed to be on the verge of solving the problems linked with the selection of literature (in embossed type, in the form of records and magnetic tapes or in flat-bed type), as well as with its quantitative and specific correlation for the libraries for the blind. Three types of libraries were identified. The typology was based on the composition of readers and the nature of the functions performed by libraries. Libraries of the 1st type serve in the main readers with little preliminary training and fulfil educational and self-educational functions. They are located in the regions with one or two specialised enterprises for the blind and over 2,000 sightless people.

The libraries of the 2nd type along with these main functions meet specific educational and production needs of better trained readers and conduct their reference-information service. They are located in the regions with 2,500-5,00 sightless people and 2-5 enterprises for the blind.

The libraries of the 3rd type serve, apart from the above-mentioned readers, considerable contingents of intellectuals: scientists, post-graduates, school teachers and students of higher schools; they also inform specialists about literature in response to individual and group requests. Libraries of this type are generally set up in big industrial cities with a considerable number of sightless people (5,000-16,000) and a large number of big enterprises for the blind (5-15) which sometimes cooperate with enterprises of the state industry.

In respect of readership and forms of work such libraries are close to scientific ones.

The typology of libraries identified according to these criteria makes it possible to unify the building-up of collections in libraries of the same type and to identify the optimal composition of the book collection for each type of libraries.

In 1977 the RCLB elaborated "A list of literature making up the basis of a book collection of libraries for the blind." This list includes, apart from publications obligatory for all the three types of libraries (socio-economic literature, Party and government documents, popular science literature, fiction

and guide-books), literature oriented at intellectuals and students served by libraries of the 2nd and 3rd types. The list is a scientific basis for current and long-term planning of publication of books in embossed type and on magnetic tape, and allows to influence the public action policy effectively, promotes the improvement of the qualitative composition of the collections.

The libraries for the blind have set up an effective system of disclosing the accumulated book wealth which contains much information and enables sightless readers to make utmost use of library collections. Annually special libraries lend several million books to readers. Thus, over 8 million books were lent in 1980.

Catalogues disclose the contents of the collections of libraries for the blind. The system of catalogues provides for the all-round disclosure of both embossed and recorded literature and flat-bed literature. Catalogues for readers are made on 12x18 cm cards, which are large enough to accomodate a full citation in embossed type and make it easier for sightless readers to use a catalogue. The rules for the description of embossed books and "readers" reflect all the peculiarities of these kinds of publications (type, the speed of tape drive, reproduction sources, quantitative paramters expressed in spines rolls, recording time, etc.)

To order catalogues and to ensure uniformity in the description of book collections the Republican Library for the Blind has been issuing since 1968 annotated printed cards for embossed books and "readers". Cards are printed in 600 copies, which makes it possible to use them not only for catalogues but also for sending to readers home and extra-mural lending cards in order to keep them up-to-date about new accessions.

Apart from card catalogues the libraries for the blind make wide use of catalogues in the form of books, which is also linked with nonstationary forms of service and delivery of books to sightless readers' homes. The catalogue of books issued in embossed type is printed in the braille system and covers all the books of the collection. Besides, annual issues are published in flat-bed type; they include all the new accessions received within a year. Annotated listings of "readers" available in the collection and listings of annual accessions in flat-bed type are prepared. An audio catalogue is also prepared for "readers". It was designed as a series of logically linked bibliographic reviews having used materials from sections related to or close

in subject matter by partial duplication. Thus, for the benefit of students all the text-books and manuals from all the sections of the catalogue had been put together; the list of books about the country's past included historical literature and fiction. The same principle was adhered to in compiling a section devoted to literary studies (history and criticism of literature and fiction).

Each review is preceded by a brief preface which elucidates the importance of a given topic for the reader. Each work is supplied with brief annotations.

As is known, the role of annotations for blind readers is becoming increasingly important. Whereas readers of ordinary libraries can rapidly scan a dozen titles of books to choose the one that suits them most, a sightless person cannot familiarize himself (or herself) with the contents of a braille book so rapidly; it is even more difficult for a blind person to form an idea about "a reader." Therefore, preliminary acquaintance with a book by reading an annotation is of special importance for him.

Listening to reviews of new books recorded on magnetic tape or transmitted on telephone is a convenient form of mass information about new literature. The reviews are updated twice a month. Any reader by dialling a definite telephone number can learn about new accessions within 5 minutes.

Thus, publications of reproduced literature on a state planned basis by using the financial resources of the All-Russia Society of the Blind, and large-scale provision of sightless people with all kinds of publications through a centralised library network are the main prerequisites of social achievmenets of the Russian Federation in supplying sightless people with books.